



Westin Aruba Resort hosts a welcome dinner for ATCA delegates

Tuesday evening, before embarking on two intensive days of networking and brainstorming, the participants of the 19th ATCA Conference relaxed and renewed acquaintances during an elegant welcome dinner in the Palm Beach Ballroom of the Westin Aruba Resort.

Acting as host for the evening and welcoming the gathering, Rob Smith expressed appreciation for the opportunity “for those in Aruba to show our gratitude for all those that promote the island and all you do to make it a success.” He also expressed that he sometimes “just can’t believe how far Aruba has come” in the ten years since he first arrived on the island.

Rob was instrumental in providing a departure from the usual conference event, in what he feels is a reflection of “the Westin attitude of doing things.” Instead of the usual Caribbean Barbecue Buffet “which all these people have seen dozens of times,” declared Rob, “I felt it would be a welcome change for them to see what a beautifully elegant affair we are capable of here, and also give our chef a chance to show what he can do.”

Chef Girard Costas did not disappoint, presenting a delightful gourmet menu featuring Blackened Sea Bass, gnocchi, and a delightful dessert featuring a Passion Fruit Coulis.

Preceding the dinner, delegates experienced a sampling of the “Unwind Hour,” a Westin daily ritual offered to their guests at sunset. While sipping a fine wine, or something from the martini bar, they could peruse a selection of art from the Oranjestad Kunsthuis organized by curator Gilbert Senchi. They also were offered some relaxation at the end of a tense day of traveling with a message by the skilled Essi of Intermezzo Spa, or take away some good advice about sunburn protection from the Aruba Aloe factory.

During the dinner, they were entertained with easy-listening music by the fabulous duo of C-Zar Olarte and Sasha, who regularly entertain at the resort. Especially imported from Venezuela for the evening, violinist and vocalist Javier Gracia charmed the audience while strolling from table to table with his violin. He will be performing in the lobby bar for the rest of the week.

Delegates expressed delight and enthusiasm for this departure from the usual island event, and were off early to prepare for the hard work ahead over the next week, as following the conference will be a marketing “retreat,” during which Aruba’s marketing policy for the next year will be planned.